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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/990,960	11/21/2001	Jeffrey A. Hall	HRT-55405	2916

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EXAMINER

VRETTAKOS, PETER J

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3739

DATE MAILED: 05/06/2003

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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

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Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/990,960	HALL, JEFFREY A.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Peter J Vrettakos	3739	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 March 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 20-33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 20-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

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DETAILED ACTION

The below action is final and in response to Amendment A dated 3-4-03.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 20-22 and 26-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Strul in view of Gentelia et al. ('165).

Independent claim 20

Strul et al. (Strul) discloses an ablation system comprising: a power control system (18, fig. 4), a patient return electrode (23, ^{Fig 2} col. 5:27-31), a computer with a RS-232 data port (col. 7:19-21), an EP monitoring system (ECG, col. 7:12-14), and a processor (60).

Note column 7 lines 26-35. The functions of the processor include *continuous monitoring* (or ongoing verifications) of current and voltage, which provides insight into the connection between the power control system and the return electrode, as well as the return electrode and the biological tissue. Also, note Strul's disclosure regarding system verification checks in: the last line of the abstract and column 6: 37-42.

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Dependent claims

Re: claims 21 and 22, Strul discloses displays (42) and switches (44) that generate error indications when an open circuit in the ablation system is detected (col. 6:37-46). An open circuit could be due to the absence of an inserted connector breaching the connection between the power control system and the patient return electrode.

Re: claims 26-29, Strul discloses a connector to permit connection of the internal microprocessor to an external computer (col. 7:15-20). Strul discloses, as mentioned above, that when system connections are breached, an error signal is generated. This would inherently include the connection between the computer and the power control system.

Re: claims 31-33, Strul discloses a processor that is adapted to begin continuous monitoring / verification upon initiation of a signal from a switch (44e, col. 6:58-67). Further, Strul discloses a catheter (12) and a catheter receptacle (50).

Note: the applicant's system claims include language directed toward intended use (ex. claim 30, "wait for confirmation that the signals were displayed..."). The examiner is not obligated to provide prior art that explicitly discloses analogous intended use. As long as *all claimed structural elements* are located in the prior art, regardless if the art mentions analogous intended use, the prior art rejection is valid as the patented invention is deemed *capable* of performing the intended use steps found in the

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applicant's claims. In other words, the limitations found in the applicant's system claims that are directed toward intended use are not given any weight with regards to prior art rejections throughout this office action.

Strul, however neglects to explicitly disclose a processor programmed to prevent RF power output when contact between the return electrode and the patient is breached.

Gentelia discloses a return path monitoring system for use with an ablation system such as that disclosed by Strul comprising, *inter alia*, a monitoring means (processor) that prevents RF power output when contact between the return electrode and the patient is breached (col. 2:34-39.)

Therefore, at the time of the invention it would have been obvious to modify Strul in view of Gentelia by including a processor programmed to prevent RF power output when contact between the return electrode and the patient is breached in order to prevent burns.

Claims 23-25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Strul in view of Gentelia and further in view of Newton et al. ('276).

Strul neglects to disclose a return electrode with at least two return pads.

Newton et al. (Newton) discloses a return electrode monitoring system comprising, *inter alia*, a power control system (10), an electrode (16) to be used in a catheter, and two electrically isolated return pads (20,22). Newton also discloses

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impedance detection circuitry (42) that will generate an error indication when the detected values are not within a targeted range (col. 4:43-53)

Further regarding impedance measurements, Strul discloses continuous monitoring (verification, comparison) of impedance values. When the monitored impedance values are greater than expected, an error indication is generated (col. 6:37-46).

Therefore, at the time of the invention it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Strul in view of Gentelia and further in view of Newton by including as a design expedient, two return electrode pads. The motivation would be to avoid three common dangers inherent to single return electrode pads as disclosed by Newton in column 1. Specifically, the use of two pads allows for monitoring of impedance between the return electrodes and the patient itself (in addition to the impedance of the patient return circuit).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 20-33 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

New art (Gentelia) has been presented disclosing a processor that inhibits RF application when the contact between the return electrode and the patient is breached.

Conclusion

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Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire **THREE MONTHS** from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within **TWO MONTHS** of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the **THREE-MONTH** shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than **SIX MONTHS** from the date of this final action.

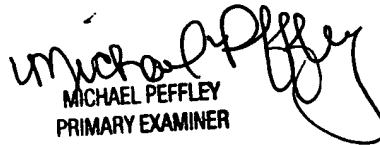
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Peter J Vrettakos whose telephone number is 703 605 0215. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9-6.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Linda C Dvorak can be reached on 703 308 0994. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703 746 7013 for regular communications and 703 746 7013 for After Final communications.

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Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703 308 0858.

Pete Vrettakos
April 28, 2003



MICHAEL PEFFLEY
PRIMARY EXAMINER